(c) The assistance provided to State Governments under the scheme since 1993-94 is as follows:—

Year	Amount (Rs. in lakh)
1993-94	3.04
1994-95	18.99
1995-96	120.07
1996-97	241.15
1997-98	173.26
1998-99	673.85
1999-2000	460.76
2001-01	661.11
2001-02	201.08
2002-03	539.11

Environment protection

*176 SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal before Government to make corporates more responsive towards environment protection;

(b) if so, the details of such proposal; and

(c) what steps the Government are taking or propose to take to make corporate bodies adopt environmental audit and management system which helps in achieving the goal of sustainable development?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has taken initiatives for making Corporates more responsible towards environment protection. After a series of interactive meets with major industrial sectors, a Charter on Corporate Responsibility for Environment Protection has been released in March, 2003. Adoption of cleaner technologies, improved environmental management, re-use

and re-cycle of wastes and self regulation mechanism are the part of the Charter for seventeen categories of highly polluting industries.

(c) The Government has introduced voluntary scheme on undertaking environmental auditing and environmental management by the industries. However, it is mandatory for industries (large and medium category) to submit annual environmental statements to the Government.

Mercury pollution

*177. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what studies have been made on the increasing threat of mercury pollution in the country;

(b) whether the mercury imports by India have doubled during the last five years;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) what steps are being taken by the Ministry to stop Europe from turning India into a mercury dumping ground; and

(e) whether India would attempt to use substitute for mercury which is non hazardous and is widely used abroad?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No comprehensive scientific study, as such, is available to suggest the increasing threat of mercury pollution in the country. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) from time to time, has been monitoring the mercury concentration in Yamuna River, ground water of National Capital Territory as well as critical polluted areas in the country. Further, CPCB has recently initiated a study on assessment of trace toxic metals including mercury emissions from thermal power plants.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Import of mercury in 2002-03 has risen to 531.2 MT as compared to 260 MT in 2001-02 as per the data available from Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce. Mercury is imported in India for use in industries like Chloralkali, dental amalgam,